

In the Claims:

1. (Currently amended) A method for delivering patient care, comprising:
 - establishing a virtual clinic on a network;
 - establishing the virtual clinic having a working relationship with at least one medical professional physician;
 - ~~establishing communications with the physicians on the network;~~
 - establishing the virtual clinic having a working relationship with a patient one or more ~~patients;~~
 - the virtual clinic being associated with at least one diagnostic center local to the patient,
 - the diagnostic center having diagnostic testing equipment;
 - receiving a request for medical services from the patient by the virtual clinic;
 - ~~establishing communications with the patients; and~~
 - establishing a real-time electronic communications link between the patient and one of
 - the at least one medical professional by the virtual clinic linking patients to physicians upon
 - initialization of communication between the patient and the virtual clinic on the network.
2. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1, ~~wherein the step of linking further comprising comprises:~~
 - accessing a web page by the patient that is provided by the virtual clinic;
 - receiving, by the virtual clinic, information about ~~for~~ the patient; and
 - based upon the information about ~~provided by~~ the patient, selecting a medical professional physician; ~~and~~
 - ~~establishing a communications link between the selected physician and the patient.~~
3. (Canceled)
4. (Canceled)
5. (Currently amended) A method for delivering patient care, comprising:

establishing a virtual clinic on a network;
~~establishing the virtual clinic having~~ a working relationship with an insurance carrier;
~~establishing communications with the insurance carrier, the insurance carrier having a~~
~~patient one or more patients~~ to which the insurance carrier provides benefits;
~~establishing the virtual clinic having~~ a working relationship with one or more medical
professionals physicians;
the virtual clinic being associated with a diagnostic center local to the patient, the
diagnostic center having diagnostic testing equipment;
receiving a request for medical services from the patient;
~~establishing communications with the physicians~~; and
establishing a real-time electronic communications link between the patient and one of
the one or more medical professionals by the virtual clinic linking patients to physicians upon
initialization of communication between the patient and the insurance carrier.

6. (Currently amended) The method of claim 5 ~~claim 1~~, ~~wherein the step of linking further~~
~~comprising comprises~~:

accessing a web page by the patient that is provided by the insurance carrier;
receiving, by the insurance carrier, information from the patient through the web page;
forwarding the information ~~from the patient~~ to the virtual clinic;
based upon the information ~~provided by the patient~~, selecting a medical professional
~~physician~~; and
~~establishing a communications link between the selected medical professional physician~~
~~and the patient.~~

7. (Canceled)

8. (Canceled)

9. (Currently amended) A system for ~~establishing communications between physicians and~~
~~patients comprising~~:

a network;
at least one medical professional physician ~~operative with the network, the physician~~
enabled to receive information from the network and to submit responses on the network;
at least one patient ~~operative with the network, the patient~~ enabled to submit information
on the network and to receive responses from the network;
a diagnostic center being local to the patient and having diagnostic testing equipment;
and
a virtual clinic being configured ~~operative with the wide area network, the virtual clinic~~
~~constructed and arranged~~ to receive information submissions and responses from the network,
~~the virtual clinic further constructed and arranged~~ to select a medical professional physician
based upon the information provided by the patient, and ~~and~~ to enable real-time electronic
communication of the information and the responses ~~link communications~~ between the medical
professional physician and the patient upon the patient submitting the request on the network, the
virtual clinic associated with the diagnostic center.

10. (Canceled)

11. (Canceled)

12. (Canceled)

13. (Currently amended) The system as in claim 9, the system further comprising:
a hospital ~~operative with the network, the hospital~~ enabled to receive the information
from the network and to submit responses.

14. (Canceled)

15. (Canceled)

16. (Currently amended) A system ~~for establishing communications between physicians and patients~~ comprising:

a network;

at least one medical professional ~~physician operative with the network~~, the physician enabled to receive information from the network and to submit responses on the network;

~~at least one~~ a patient ~~operative with the network~~, the patient enabled to make a request for medical services, to submit the information on the network and to receive the responses from the network;

a diagnostic center being local to the patient and having diagnostic testing equipment;

an insurance carrier being configured ~~operative with the network~~, the insurance carrier ~~constructed and arranged~~ to receive the request for medical services from the patient and to forward the request to a virtual clinic ~~operative with the wide area network~~, the virtual clinic being configured ~~constructed and arranged~~ to receive the information and the submissions and responses from the network, the virtual clinic being configured ~~further constructed and arranged~~ to select one of the at least one medical professional ~~a physician~~ based upon the information provided by the patient, the virtual clinic being configured and to enable real-time electronic communication of the information and the responses ~~link communications between the medical professional physician and the patient upon the patient submitting the request on the network~~, the virtual clinic being associated with the diagnostic center.

17. (Canceled)

18. (Canceled)

19. (Canceled)

20. (Currently amended) The system as in claim 16, the system further comprising:

a hospital ~~operative with the network~~, the hospital enabled to receive the information from the network and to submit responses.

21. (Canceled)

22. (Canceled)

23. (Canceled)

24. (Canceled)

25. (Currently amended) A method for developing a virtual clinic for allowing a patient to remotely contact a medical professional ~~physician~~ and receive medical services, comprising:

establishing a virtual clinic having capabilities for:

(a) enabling the patient to contact ~~contacting~~ the virtual clinic ~~by the patient~~,

(b) collecting information on the patient's medical condition,

(c) identifying at least one medical professional ~~physician~~ based on the collected information ~~on patient's medical condition~~, and

(d) ~~storing and~~ accessing the patient's ~~patient~~ medical records;

establishing a working relationship with the least one medical professional ~~physician~~ to provide medical services to patients referred via the virtual clinic, the medical professional

~~physician~~ providing information relating to qualifications for use during a selection process;

providing diagnostic testing equipment local to the patient and associated with the virtual clinic; and

enabling by the virtual clinic electronic real-time electronic communication between the patient and the medical professional ~~physician~~ to transmit the information ~~data~~ regarding the patient's ~~patients~~ condition, results from the diagnostic equipment, and recommended treatment.

26. (Canceled)

27. (Currently amended) The method of claim 25 further comprising:

submitting information relating to medical licenses by the medical professional ~~physician~~; and

comparing a patient's residence with the medical professional's ~~physician's~~ medical license by the virtual clinic.

28. (Currently amended) The method of claim 25 further comprising:
providing the patient with access to the diagnostic testing equipment.
29. (Currently amended) The method of claim 25, wherein the step of providing diagnostic testing equipment comprises providing for communication of diagnostic testing equipment results with the ~~virtual clinic and~~ at least one medical professional ~~physician~~.
30. (Original) The method of claim 25, wherein the virtual clinic has a presence on at least one Internet site.
31. (Currently amended) The method of claim 25, wherein the virtual clinic further has ~~is further provided~~ the capability for at least one insurance company to refer ~~referring~~ patients to the virtual clinic.
32. (Currently amended) The method of claim 25, wherein the virtual clinic has ~~is further provided~~ the capability for at least one hospital to refer ~~referring~~ patients to the virtual clinic.
33. (Currently amended) The method of claim 25, wherein the virtual clinic has ~~is further provided~~ the capability for informing a medical professional ~~physician~~ of diagnostic testing equipment results ~~accessible to a patient~~.
34. (Currently amended) The method of claim 25, wherein the virtual clinic has ~~is further provided~~ the capability for allowing a medical professional ~~physician~~ to access and update a patient's medical records.
35. (Canceled)

36. (Canceled)

37. (Canceled)

38. (Currently amended) The method of claim 25 ~~claim 36~~, further comprising:
contracting with at least one hospital to provide access to diagnostic testing equipment to patients of the virtual clinic.

39. (Canceled)

40. (Currently amended) A method for a patient to remotely contact a medical professional ~~physician~~ and to receive medical services, comprising:
the patient contacting a virtual clinic;
the patient providing information on his medical condition to the virtual clinic;
the virtual clinic identifying a medical professional ~~physician~~ based on the patient-provided medical condition information;
the virtual clinic enabling real-time electronic communication between the patient and the identified medical professional;
the patient corresponding electronically with the medical professional ~~physician~~;
~~the patient submitting diagnostic testing to the physician~~;
the virtual clinic enabling the patient to access a diagnostic center being local to the patient and associated with the virtual clinic, the diagnostic center having diagnostic testing equipment; and
the medical professional ~~physician~~ informing the patient of recommended ~~the~~ treatment.

41. (Original) The method of claim 40, further comprising:
at least one insurance company referring at least one patient to the virtual clinic.

42. (Original) The method of claim 40, further comprising:
at least one hospital referring at least one patient to the virtual clinic.

43. (Original) The method of claim 40, further comprising:
the virtual clinic receiving payment for medical services provided.
44. (Currently amended) The method of claim 43, further comprising:
the virtual clinic forwarding a portion of the received payment to the medical professional ~~at least one physician~~.
45. (Currently amended) The method of claim 40, further comprising:
informing the medical professional ~~physician~~ of the diagnostic testing equipment available to the patient.
46. (Currently amended) The method of claim 40, further comprising:
at least one medical professional ~~physician~~ providing information relating to medical licenses and the virtual clinic comparing a patient's residence with a medical professional's ~~physician's~~ medical license.
47. (Currently amended) The method of claim 40, wherein the step of identifying a medical professional ~~physician~~ based on the patient-provided medical condition information comprises medical professionals ~~physicians~~ providing information relating to qualifications and the virtual clinic comparing the patient-provided medical condition information with the medical-professional-provided ~~physician-provided~~ information relating to qualifications.
48. (Original) The method of claim 40, further comprising:
the patient contracting with the virtual clinic to provide payment in return for receiving medical services.
49. (Original) The method of claim 40, further comprising:
at least one insurance company reimbursing the virtual clinic for medical services provided to at least one patient.

50. (Currently amended) The method of claim 40, further comprising:
at least one physician reimbursing the virtual clinic for directing the patient to the
medical professional ~~physician~~.
51. (Canceled)
52. (Canceled)
53. (Canceled)
54. (Canceled)
55. (Canceled)
56. (Canceled)
57. (Canceled)
58. (New) A virtual clinic, comprising:
a web page for enabling a patient to request consultation with a medical professional and
to provide medical condition information;
a medical professional database for storing contact information and qualifications for a
set of medical professionals;
a medical professional selection component for selecting one of the medical professionals
in the medical professional database based on the predetermined criteria;
a communication component for enabling real-time electronic communication between
the selected medical professional and the patient; and
a diagnostic test equipment communication component for communicating with
diagnostic test equipment to obtain diagnostic test results of a patient.

59. (New) The virtual clinic of claim 58, wherein the predetermined criteria involves one of the qualifications of the medical professional, the patient's medical condition information, the time of the request, scheduling information, location of the patient, patient request, patient preferences, availability of a patient's standard physician, insurance information, employer information, and a prior medical professional assisting the patient.

60. (New) The virtual clinic of claim 58, further comprising a patient records accessing component for communicating with a patient records database to provide patients records information to the medical professional.